

CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ICELAND

(No. 33, 17 June 1944, as amended 30 May 1984, 31 May 1991, 28 June 1995 and 24 June 1999)

I.

Article 1

Iceland is a Republic with a parliamentary government.

Article 2

Althingi and the President of Iceland jointly exercise legislative power. The President and other governmental authorities referred to in this Constitution and elsewhere in the law exercise executive power. Judges exercise judicial power.

II.

Article 3

The President of Iceland shall be elected by the people.

Article 4

Any person who is at least thirty-five years of age and fulfils the requirements necessary to vote in elections to Althingi, with the exception of the residency requirement, is eligible to be elected President.

Article 5

The President shall be elected by direct, secret ballot of those who are eligible to vote in elections to Althingi. A presidential candidate shall be proposed by not less than 1500 voters and not more than 3000. The candidate, if there is more than one, who receives the most votes is duly elected President. If there is only one candidate, he is duly elected without a vote.

Further provision for the candidature and election of the President shall be made by law, and it may be provided that a specific number of proposers shall reside in each quarter of the country in proportion to the number of voters there.

Article 6

The President's term of office begins on the 1st of August and ends on the 31st of July four years later. The election of President takes place in June or July of the year in which a term of office expires.

Article 7

If the President dies or resigns prior to the expiry of his term of office, a new President shall be elected for a period ending on the 31st of July of the fourth year from the election.

Article 8

If the Office of President of the Republic becomes vacant or if the President is unable to perform his duties due to a stay abroad, illness, or other reasons, the Prime Minister, the President of Althingi and the President of the Supreme Court shall exercise presidential authority. The President of Althingi shall preside at their meetings. In a divergence of opinion among them, the majority shall prevail.

Article 9

The President of the Republic may not be a Member of Althingi or accept paid employment in the interest of any public institution or private enterprise.

Disbursements from State funds to the President or those who exercise presidential authority shall be established by law. These disbursements to the President may not be reduced during his term of office.

Article 10

On assuming office, the President shall take an oath or pledge to uphold the Constitution. Two identical originals shall be executed of this oath or pledge. One shall be kept by Althingi and the other by the National Archives.

Article 11

The President of the Republic may not be held accountable for executive acts. The same applies to those who exercise presidential authority.

The President may not be prosecuted on a criminal charge except with the consent of Althingi.

The President may be removed from office before his term expires if approved by a majority in a plebiscite called pursuant to a resolution adopted by three-fourths of the Members of Althingi. This plebiscite shall be held within two months from the date of adoption by Althingi of the resolution. The President shall not perform his duties from the time the resolution is adopted by Althingi until the results of the plebiscite are known.

If the resolution by Althingi is not approved in the plebiscite, Althingi shall be immediately dissolved and new elections called.

Article 12

The President of the Republic shall reside in or near Reykjavik.

Article 13

The President entrusts his authority to Ministers.

The seat of Government is in Reykjavik.

Article 14

Ministers are accountable for all executive acts. The accountability of the Ministers is established by law. Althingi may impeach Ministers on account of their official acts. The Court of Impeachment has competence in such cases.

Article 15

The President appoints Ministers and discharges them. He determines their number and assignments.

Article 16

The State Council is composed of the President of the Republic and the Ministers and is presided over by the President.

Laws and important government measures shall be submitted to the President in the State Council.

Article 17

Ministerial meetings shall be held in order to discuss new legislative proposals and important State matters. Furthermore, ministerial meetings shall be held if a Minister wishes to raise a matter there. The meetings shall be presided over by the Minister called upon by the President of the Republic to do so, who is designated Prime Minister.

Article 18

The Minister who has signed a measure shall, as a rule, submit it to the President.

Article 19

The signature of the President validates a legislative act or government measure when countersigned by a Minister.

Article 20

The President appoints public officials as provided by law.

No person may hold public office unless he has Icelandic nationality. Each public official shall take an oath or pledge to uphold the Constitution.

The President may remove from office any official whom he has appointed.

The President may transfer officials from one office to another provided that their official remuneration is not reduced, and that they have an option between such transfer and retirement with a pension, or old-age benefits, as prescribed by law.

Certain categories of officials, in addition to those mentioned in Article 61, may be exempted by law from this provision.

Article 21

The President of the Republic concludes treaties with other States. Unless approved by Althingi, he may not make such treaties if they entail renouncement of, or servitude on, territory or territorial waters, or if they require changes in the State system.

Article 22

The President of the Republic shall convene Althingi not later than ten weeks after general elections. The President opens regular sessions of Althingi each year.

Article 23

The President of the Republic may adjourn sessions of Althingi for a limited period of time, but not exceeding two weeks nor more than once a year. Althingi may, however, authorize the President to deviate from this provision.

If sessions of Althingi have been adjourned, the President of the Republic may nevertheless convene Althingi as deemed necessary. Moreover, the President, is obliged to do so upon the request of a majority of the Members of Althingi.

Article 24

The President of the Republic may dissolve Althingi. A new election must take place within 45 days from the announcement of the dissolution. Althingi shall convene not later than ten weeks after its dissolution. Members of Althingi shall retain their mandate until Election Day.

Article 25

The President of the Republic may have bills and draft resolutions submitted to Althingi.

Article 26

If Althingi has passed a bill, it shall be submitted to the President of the Republic for confirmation not later than two weeks after it has been passed. Such confirmation gives it the force of law. If the President rejects a bill, it shall nevertheless become valid but shall, as soon as circumstances permit, be submitted to a vote by secret ballot of all those eligible to vote, for approval or rejection. The law shall become void if rejected, but otherwise retains its force.

Article 27

All laws shall be published. The form of publication and the implementation of laws shall be in accordance with law.

Article 28

In case of urgency, the President may issue provisional laws when Althingi is not in session. Such laws must not, however, be contrary to the Constitution. They shall always be submitted to Althingi as soon as it convenes.

If Althingi does not approve a provisional law, or if it does not complete its consideration of the law within six weeks after convening, the law shall become void.

A provisional budget may not be issued if Althingi has passed the budget for the fiscal year.

Article 29

The President may decide that the prosecution for an offense be discontinued if there are strong reasons therefor. The President grants pardon and amnesty. However, he may not absolve a Minister from prosecution or from a punishment imposed by the Court of Impeachment, unless approved by Althingi.

Article 30

The President, or other governmental authorities entrusted by the President, grants exemptions from laws in accordance with established practice.

III.

Article 31

Althingi shall be composed of 63 members elected by the people by secret ballot on the basis of proportional representation for a term of four years.

Electoral districts shall be no fewer than six and no more than seven in number. Their boundaries shall be defined by law; however, the National Election Board may define the boundaries of the electoral districts in Reykjavik and its vicinity.

For each respective electoral district, six seats shall be allocated in accordance with the outcome of elections within that district. The number of parliamentary seats for each electoral district shall in other respects be defined by law, subject however to the provisions of the fifth paragraph.

Seats other than those allocated to the electoral districts shall be distributed within each respective electoral district with the purpose of providing individual political parties with representation reflecting to the fullest possible extent each party's total number of votes. However, only political parties having received at least five per cent of all valid votes cast nation-wide shall be eligible for such distribution.